

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BREMEN 00179 161752Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL BREMEN
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INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
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AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
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SECSTATE WASHDC 2567

UNCLAS BREMEN 179

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE AND INR/REU

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: CHARGES OF CONSPIRATORIAL CONTACTS BETWEEN BREMEN
SPD POLITICIAN AND KGB OPERATIVE REFUTED

1. THE TWO BREMEN DAILIES, WHICH WERE NOT AFFECTED BY THE NATIONWIDE STRIKE/LOCKOUT CURRENTLY IN EFFECT IN THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY, APPEARED IN THEIR USUAL FORMAT ON MARCH 15 AND CARRIED A STORY ON ALLEGED CONTACTS BY A "LEADING BREMEN SPD POLITICIAN" WITH A SOVIET KGB OPERATIVE. THE REPORT WAS BASED ON AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE LONDON "DAILY TELEGRAPH" OF MARCH 13, ACCORDING TO WHICH A SOVIET CONSULAR OFFICER IN HAMBURG, G.V. KOKOREV, WHO IS SAID TO BE THE KGB CHIEF FOR NORTH GERMANY, ALLEGEDLY HAD HAD SECRET MEETINGS WITH A WEST GERMAN (BREMEN) POLITICIAN, WHO USED A BORROWED CAR FOR THE PURPOSE AND WHO FAILED TO REPORT THIS TO THE GERMAN SECURITY AGENCIES.
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BREMEN 00179 161752Z

2. THE BREMEN CDU QUICKLY SEIZED UPON THE "TELEGRAPH" STORY AND REQUESTED THAT THE LAND LEGISLATURE (BUERGERSCHAFT) TAKE UP THE MATTER ON AN URGENT BASIS (DRINGLICHKEITSANTRAG) AT ITS MARCH 15 MEETING AND ADOPT A RESOLUTION INSTRUCTING THE BREMEN SENAT TO INVESTIGATE THE ALLEGATIONS AND TO REPORT BACK TO THE LEGISLATURE.

3. WHILE THE "BREMEN NACHRICHTEN" ACCOUNT CITED NO NAMES, THE "WESER-KURIER" STORY CARRIED THE REACTION TO THE "TELEGRAPH" REPORT BY SPD BUERGERSCHAFT DEPUTY AND LAND CHAIRMAN, HENNING SCHERF, WHO DECLARED: "WE HAD, WITHIN THE VIEW OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ENTIRELY NORMAL DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS WITH THE RUSSIAN, AMERICAN, ENGLISH, AND FRENCH CONSULS. NO MORE AND NO LESS." SCHERF SAID THAT HE WAS THE ALLEGED MYSTERY CONTACT MAN OF THE SOVIET CONSUL FROM HAMBURG, WHO THREE YEARS AGO OFFICIALLY REQUESTED, THROUGH THE HAMBURG RATHAUS, TO MEET WITH HIM. HIS MEETINGS WITH KOKOREV INVARIABLY WERE AT THE BUERGERSCHAFT, WITHIN OPEN VIEW OF EVERYBODY. SCHERF ADDED THAT HE ALSO HAD OCCASION TO GREET KOKOREV PUBLICLY AT BREMEN SPD CONVENTIONS, THE SAME WAY HE DID OTHER CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVES.

4. ACTING WITH INORDINATE SPEED, THE BREMEN SENATOR OF INTERIOR, FROEHLICH, REPORTED TO THE BUERGERSCHAFT AT ITS REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING ON MARCH 15 THAT HIS DEPARTMENT HAD ALREADY CONDUCTED AND COMPLETED AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ALLEGATIONS IN THE "TELEGRAPH" ARTICLE. THE IMPLICATIONS OF IMPROPER CONDUCT OR CONSPIRATORIAL CONTACTS, HE SAID, WERE WITHOUT ANY FOUNDATION. IN THE DEBATE THAT FOLLOWED, SPD SPOKESMEN, INCLUDING SCHERF HIMSELF, DEFENDED THEIR "NORMAL" CONTACTS WITH FOREIGN CONSULAR OFFICIALS AND CHARGED THE CDU WITH TRYING TO MISUSE AN UNSUBSTANTIATED UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BREMEN 00179 161752Z

AND VICIOUS STORY IN A FOREIGN NEWSPAPER TO MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL. SCHERF FIRMLY AND INDIGNANTLY DENIED ANY SECRET CONTACTS WITH THE SOVIET CONSULAR OFFICIAL WHO, HE SAID, HAD PROPER CONSULAR ACCREDITATION (THE SOVIETS' CONSULAR DISTRICT OF HAMBURG ENCOMPASSES BREMEN). ANY OTHER FUNCTIONS KOKOREV MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE HAD, WERE UNKNOWN TO HIM, SCHERF CONCLUDED. THE FDP FLOOR LEADER EXPRESSED SATISFACTION OVER THE SPEEDY INVESTIGATION BY THE SENATOR OF INTERIOR AND THE LIFTING OF ANY POSSIBLE CLOUD OF SUSPICION FROM HIS SPD COLLEAGUE. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE DEBATE, THE CDU ALSO ACCEPTED SENATOR FROEHLICH'S REPORT AND SCHERF'S DENIALS OF ANY IMPROPRIETY AND WITHDREW ITS DRINGLICHKEITSANTRAG. AND SO ENDED BREMEN'S SHORT-LIVED TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT. SCHIFFMAN

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